MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD AT THE OFFICE OF WM. MITCHELL KENDALL, 101 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY,
TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 1921.

A committee meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held at the office of Mr. Wm. Mitchell Kendall, 101 Park Avenue, New York City, on Tuesday, August 23, 1921. The meeting was called primarily to inspect and pass upon designs for school buildings to be erected in the District of Columbia and therefore present and former architectural members of the Commission were requested to attend the meeting. The following were in attendance at the meeting: Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman; Mr. Ayres; Mr. Wm. Mitchell Kendall; Mr. Platt; Mr. Gilbert; Mr. Albert L. Harris, Municipal Architect of the District of Columbia; Major C. H. Brown, Assistant Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia; Lieut. Colonel C. O. Sherrill, Secretary and Executive Officer of the Commission of Fine Arts, and Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Assistant to the Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. ✓ DESIGNS FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Mr. Harris said, in presenting the plans, that the District officials have two distinct problems: first, a unit alongside a present unit, in which the design is controlled by the existing building; second, an entirely new building, permitting an individual design.

The designs were taken up in order; the nature of the problem in each case was explained to the Commission and a discussion followed. Changes were recommended in several instances, all in the line of greater simplicity in the designs, and incidentally resulting in a saving in the cost of construction. The Commission advised the avoidance of pavilions unless actually needed, and suggested certain changes in the window spacings where the plans allowed, in order to improve proportions as shown in the design.

Mr. Harris called attention to the fact that the plans in certain cases called for assembly halls or auditoriums to serve as community centers. The arrangement of class rooms in relation to the auditorium was therefore considered very important. Mr. Harris said that since he had assumed the office of Municipal Architect a few months ago he has been giving great amount of time to the plans for buildings now under construction. He submitted designs for nine buildings and extensions of buildings, all of which have to be completed in fourteen months:

The following designs were submitted:

1. John Eaton School, Cleveland Park. An extension to the existing building with plan for auditorium to be built under a later appropriation. More wall space was recommended over the doorway of the main entrance; a different arrangement of windows, and the elimination of flagpole and simplified entrance.

2. Buchanan School between D and E, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, Southeast. The proposition is to build eight rooms in the center, with space for an extension of eight rooms; also space for an auditorium. Changes in the windows were advised and more wall space in the front elevation.

3. Mott School. Since another story is to be built in the indefinite future, simplicity of design for the roof was urged. The roof is to be low pitched with lower pediment; there should be less monumental treatment of the entrance and a rearrangement of the stairway.

4. Addition to the Deanwood School. Fewer windows were suggested, and more wall space over the main entrance.

5. Wheatley School. It was recommended that there be made a change in the design of the roof of the central building to relate it more properly to

the adjoining wings; also the elimination of breaks.

6. Bell School. This design calls for a new school building. A perspective should be made. The design shows the windows as a series of squares.

7. Proposed Elementary School, Lincoln Park. A simplification of the front elevation was recommended.

8. Smothers School. This school is between Forty-fourth and Forty-fifth Streets, northeast, beyond the Benning Power House plant. A general restudy of the design for this school was recommended. The entrance had too monumental an appearance. The plan provides for another story in the future and therefore the roof should be simplified. A rearrangement of the stairway was recommended.

9. Eastern High School. Mr. Harris stated that the Eastern High School, to be located between 17th and 19th Streets on East Capitol Street, N. E., was being built, and he was submitting a sketch for a treatment of the approach to the school from the sidewalk. It was proposed to have a stairway ascend gradually to a terrace in the center of which and immediately in front of the main building the alumni of Eastern High School propose to erect a flagpole as a memorial to the seven graduates of that school who died during the World War. The members thought the design for the base of the flagpole out of scale. Mr. Kendall thereupon sketched a simplified base and pedestal. A broad panel of grass in front of the school was recommended, as in keeping with the large frontage of the main building. There was too much detail in the landscape design as submitted.

2. STATUE OF DANTE: A revised design of the pedestal proposed for the Statue of Dante was brought to the attention of the members with the

information received from Mr. Sebatta, Charge d'Affairs of the Italian Embassy, that an early report in the matter was desired from the Commission since they wish to dedicate the monument during the six-hundredth anniversary celebration of the death of Dante to take place in Washington early in October. The design submitted showed that the embellishments shown in the previous design of the pedestal have been eliminated but they had not lowered the pedestal as the Commission had recommended. In view of the desire to dedicate the statue in October the members considered a specific location for the statue in Meridian Hill Park, and recommended that the statue be placed on the east side of the grand terrace. The statue is to face the center, and it is to be placed on a temporary pedestal which could be completed in time for the celebration and at the same time give an opportunity to see the statue in place with reference to the general layout of the park and also with reference to the proposed statue of Jeanne D'Arc which is to be erected in the immediate vicinity. It was thought that a pedestal not much more than five feet in height would be necessary. Mr. Ayres agreed to make a study of the submission with Mr. Kendall, and it was understood that Mr. Fraser would be consulted in regard to the sculptural matters.

3. SOLDIERS MEMORIAL CROSS: Mr. Ayres reported that he had made a careful study of the revised design submitted by Major Granger for the proposed Soldiers Memorial Cross. Mr. Ayres stated he was not satisfied with the design and that he had made a sketch of a cross which he thought had better proportions. Mr. Moore said the Soldiers Memorial Cross Committee desired a duplicate of the wooden cross in France, but that Major Granger had brought into his design elements such as a base with architectural treatment, a platform and steps which were not a part of the original plan. Mr. Moore said he thought the sketch submitted by Mr. Ayres was designed as the cross should be,

and that he would confer with the members of the Soldiers Memorial Cross Committee in regard to the matter.

4. ✓ POTOMAC DRIVE, LINCOLN MEMORIAL: Colonel Sherrill submitted the following letter with design:

> "I submit herewith for the consideration of the Commission of Fine Arts a design of the proposed roadway from the Lincoln Memorial to New Hampshire Avenue, and of the proposed roadway from B Street southward along the Potomac and west of the Lincoln Memorial, connecting with the Potomac Drive."

The members were in accord with the recommendation that there should be a continuous drive from the Rock Creek Parkway west of the Lincoln Memorial to connect with the Speedway in Potomac Park, but left the question of layout of the roadways extending northwest and south of the Lincoln Memorial for future consideration. Mr. Moore said that in view of the excessive traffic in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial additional roadways which would permit of giving the Lincoln Memorial more seclusion, or protection, were urgently needed. Mr. Moore also said that Mr. Greenleaf, who is expected back from Europe by September 16th, is very much interested in this "Riverside Drive" and that the matter could be taken up further soon after his return. Mr. Gilbert said he was much interested in this roadway considered in relation to the proposed Memorial Bridge to Arlington; that the architects who made designs for the proposed bridge a number of years ago had all found difficulty with the angle of the bridge from the Lincoln Memorial and crossing the river to Arlington. Mr. Gilbert stated that he felt the bridge ought to extend from the Lincoln Memorial to Analostan Island, which is included in the park system of the District of Columbia, and is to be developed later accordingly, and thence from Analostan Island to Arlington. Mr. Gilbert thought even two bridges could

be built if necessary. The one crossing the main channel of the Potomac would very probably be a draw-bridge. Colonel Sherrill said it is expected the President will request that an appropriation be made available in the near future to permit of the execution of new designs for the bridge.

5. MODELS FOR HEADSTONES: Mr. Leo Friedlander submitted models of the Cross and Star of David proposed for the headstones of the World War graves. The model of the Cross was considered satisfactory; the model of the Star of David was also thought well executed according to the specifications, but it was made without the cross lines which usually appear in the Star of David. Mr. Fraser stated that to cut the Star of David with cross lines would be five times as costly as one six pointed star with a flat surface. Colonel Penrose is to be advised accordingly. (Exhibit A).

6. VERDUN MEDAL: Mr. Fraser said that Mr. Flanagan in a finished model of the reverse of the Verdun Medal had made some changes in the treatment about the feet of the wrestlers. Mr. Fraser said he desired to call attention to this matter so that consideration could be given to it when the final model would be submitted.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m. Luncheon was had at the Century Club, after which a call was made at the office of Mr. Cass Gilbert to see a design proposed for the First Division Memorial. The design appeared similar to the monument at West Point. Mr. Gilbert said he would submit the design to the Commission later. A trip was then made to Mr. Fraser's studio where a full sized model was seen of the proposed statue of Alexander Hamilton, to be located on the south side of the Treasury building. Mr. Fraser stated that he was conferring with the Treasury Department regarding the pedestal for this statue.

C O P Y

August 24, 1921.

Dear Colonel Penrose:

At a meeting held yesterday Mr. Leo Friedlander, of Stamford, Connecticut, submitted to the members of the Commission two models for the headstones of the World War graves, namely, a Cross and a Star of David, and they are transmitted to you herewith. The Cross was thought to be very well executed.

The Star of David was also thought to be well executed, and represents a six pointed star with a smooth surface according to the specifications. Attention was called to the fact that a Star of David usually has the cross lines, and it is thought probable that the Star of David as it appears in the model was not made with cross lines because of the smooth surface desired, as indicated in the specifications. The question as to whether the Star of David as it is to appear on the headstone is to have a smooth surface or is to be shown with cross lines is submitted to you for consideration. In this connection the Commission have to advise that they believe that the Star of David cut with cross lines will cost five times as much as the Star with a smooth surface. Should the War Department desire a model of the Star of David with cross lines an additional model should be made.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) C. O. Sherrill,
Lieut. Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Colonel George H. Penrose,
Chief, Graves Registration Service,
Office of the Quartermaster General,
War Department.

EXHIBIT A